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Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



LOUIS H. SULLIVAN

April, 1945

✓ Last Call for Chippendale

Bigger and Better Conventions

Cooperative Community Ownership

Housing and the Urban Esthetic

Michigan and Unification

Saving Europe's Art—II

A Single Voice for the Architectural
and Engineering Professions

35c

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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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Housing and the Urban Esthetic

By Carl Feiss

PROFESSOR OF PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Excerpts by permission from an article
in *Magazine of Art* for November, 1944.

UNQUESTIONABLY the most functional shelter man has yet devised is the sardine can. Sardines, however, when they arrive in this gleaming and compact new home, have usually lost their heads and are reasonably inert. They remain decoratively interlaced in uniform harmony. No architect, however ingenious, can possibly succeed so well with a human family, and the human family has seldom evinced any pleasure at remaining indefinitely in boxes on a shelf without their heads. Housing design may be mechanically perfect, but mechanical perfection should be subordinate to the human requirements for pleasant shelter, which need light, color, privacy, the growing things in nature, the sense of community, environmental repose, the sense of interior and exterior space, and the great variety of artifacts which give, whatever and wherever the place may be, the love of home. . . .

Sadly enough, for all our architectural imitation of our forebears, we have failed to derive from them

the sense of urban order which they quite often successfully achieved. The haphazard development of our cities and their surroundings, filled with architectural platitudes, has made it necessary for us to tie buildings together in most residential areas by the best common bond which can be found, which is at the same time the best mode of concealment. The art of landscape architecture, though relatively immature throughout the country, has developed far enough to achieve an understanding that the privet hedge, the masking evergreen and the spreading elm can form a universal least common denominator in averaging off the infinite variety of architectural specimens with which the esthetically free soul has adorned our suffering land.

Yet on the whole our American cities are very ugly. There are few downtown streets or intown areas from which one derives any esthetic satisfaction. One is often overpowered by size, noise, or the color of lights . . . Compare driv-

ing through our urban or suburban residential streets with a visit to a New England village, a Cotswold town, or a German *siedlung* development of the 1920's. It is not the question of age or picturesque quality, or of structural design. It is a question of unity, order, and a sense of repose and propriety which has performed the highly satisfactory function of creating the sensation of community.

What is meant by "sensation of community"? Perhaps the answer can best be explained by standing in the community shopping center at Queensbridge Houses, New York, or walking down the mall at Wyvernwood in Los Angeles. It is a sensation which has been revived from the dying traditions of the New England and Early American communal towns. The Piazza San Marco is the community center of Venice. With all the drama that architecture can command, the great squares of Persia, the Roman *fora*, the town market-places of Medieval Europe, the innumerable centers which city planning history have created for us—each developed the focal points about which the community revolved. Good housing design throughout the United States has also developed focal points, by tying into existing centers or creating new ones. Architecture plays a major part in the creation of designed space for social interaction, an attractive setting within which people move, but it is not in the

centers themselves but in the attachment of the centers to even the most outlying structure that the sense of unity in design can achieve the greatest degree of satisfaction to the resident of the planned community. Only the nomad and the hermit can remain alone indefinitely, and the best community design provides for a graceful place for the free association of people. The sense of community creates, if properly developed, a real esthetic.



Prior to 1930 in the United States there have been few satisfactory examples of consciously designed communities in which architectural design of the whole was the sum of the conscious design of the parts. When Daniel Burnham developed in 1909 his famous Chicago Plan, creating that urban esthetic period known as "the city beautiful," Mr. Jules Guerin, that superlative renderer, portrayed the great radial avenues as subtending between them uniform cubic masses of buildings vaguely reminiscent of Parisian Renaissance structures. If constructed as sketched, Chicago's density of population and buildings would have been even greater and more ghastly than it is today. City planning was not yet conscious that not the facade alone, but the complete three-dimensional structure designed as a whole was required to create a truly satisfying urban scene. Neither the Italian nor the

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French Renaissance, on which American urban planning was so largely based until the 1920's, was conceived on other than the false front. In fact, basically a false front of columns and pediment is architecturally no more honest than a false front of planking so often found lining the streets of the pioneer prairie city.

Very occasionally we find isolated little three-dimensional, planned towns prior to the European influence in housing after 1920. Perhaps the most successful is the consciously Colonial, Yorkship Village near Camden, New Jersey, designed by Frederick Ackerman* in 1918 as a war housing project. Bertram Goodhue nearly succeeded in achieving a similar unity in his design of the small city of Tyrone, New Mexico. In both of these and in some cities of lesser design importance, both houses and public buildings were conceived as part of the city plan, and the full three-dimensional quality was achieved in a sense almost as a sculptural unity. However, much to the shame of American city planners and architects, a full understanding of the importance of three-dimensional design was not obtained in the United States until

after ten years of brilliant experiment and successful achievement by European architects between 1920-1930.

It took Federal subsidy in public housing to launch in this country for the first time on any large scale the design of residential areas as units. The influence of German, Dutch and English housing of the 1920's was immediately apparent in the few scattered projects of PWA housing. The best-known conservative architects largely hesitated to indulge in this non-traditional concept. The designers of banks, Gothic churches, skyscrapers and elaborate country houses found little in their vocabulary which could fit the language of the row house, the garden apartment, and the large-scale residential project on slum-cleared land. The problem was a baffling one. Buildings must be inexpensive, more or less uniform in height, in materials, and in the size of the units. There was little room for ornament, for emphasis on facade, for all of the tricks and knickknacks which had filled the architectural books and magazines for so many years. Instead there seemed to be limitless walls and windows, and acres of open space, walks, laundry yards, utilities, and Barrett specification roofing. Thus unfortunately we will find throughout the United States housing projects designed in the 1930's and early 1940's resembling little more than rows of

*Mr. Ackerman was Chief of Housing and Town Plan Design of U. S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation. The architect of Yorkship Village, designed for the Emergency Fleet Corporation and N. Y. Shipbuilding Co., was Electus D. Litchfield.—Editor.

gigantic septic tanks perforated with innumerable vents. . . .

But city designers were being taught a lesson which, it is hoped, they will never forget. They were taught in many instances that in large-scale residential area design there is no such thing as a front and back, that people live and work and move all around a building and a group of buildings. In a sense the new design achieved a fourth dimension, that of time and movement. It was necessary to create a building ensemble through which people would move constantly, creating new vistas, new directions and new elements of interest. Even where the structures themselves lack architectural interest, in many cases the scale of the projects and the handling of terrain completely altered the appearance of large areas of the city.

As an example, in Pittsburgh the creation of terrace villages in the center of the city has developed an astonishing esthetic effect. Row after row of uniformly similar structures placed above each other on great shelves has produced a massing of brick buildings and a pattern of the disposed structures totally unlike anything to be found anywhere else in the world. . . . Anyone who had stood on the hills overlooking Pittsburgh in the late afternoon and looked over the winding valleys across the dramatic glare and smoke of the steel mills, to these new terraces which stand out so well in contrast to the jum-

ble of black wooden slum still remaining, cannot help being excited by the over-all effect.

In Cleveland one walks for miles completely surrounded by housing of more or less uniform design and construction arranged in courts and quadrangles, carefully planted with trees and lawn. It creates a curious sensation, a combination of a sense of order and a satisfaction which comes from being completely enveloped within a conscious design, from the sense of being within, rather than simply being on the outside looking at a group of buildings. Many contemporary American architects have developed refinements of detail, proportion, design, and the use of materials in housing without having attained this sense of unity of site planning and structure.



The site plans which depend largely for their inspiration on the English tradition of court, quadrangle and enclosure, or the continuity from enclosure to enclosure, on the whole have proven more satisfactory to the American search for human scale in most housing than those which have followed the German superblock, or *Zeilenbau* scheme. The *Zeilenbau* scheme consists of parallel rows of building more or less oriented according to the will of the designer, and open at the ends. This plan often fails in esthetic satisfaction by creating too many stiff rows of build-

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ings and preventing those units which are on the inside from having a view out, since both sides of the buildings must face other buildings directly across the long courts. The great merit of the *Zeilenbau* is the emphasis on orientation, rhythm, sequence, and repetition of elements to create architectural motifs of great strength on a horizontal plane. However, these projects often fail to achieve a satisfactory sense of unity because of the open ends, which may be opposite structures or parts of the community completely inharmonious with the project.

A number of compromises between the two types of scheme have been worked out in which a less mechanical design than the *Zeilenbau* has been used in an open plan, such as that to be found in the Gropius and Breuer project, Aluminum City Terrace, New Kensington, Pa., and the Woodville, Calif., FSA town designed by Vernon De Mars and Associates. Mr. Gropius' plan is noteworthy because of its great freedom and its effort to follow closely the contours of a very hilly site, and at the same time provide maximum sun orientation. If anything it errs on the side of an overlooseness. Many architects have failed to realize in the design of housing projects that the association of roof-line, wall surface, and color from building to building is as important as the design of the individual building itself. It is the easy flow

of structures in space which can achieve the greatest visual satisfaction.

One of our noteworthy projects, incorporating within it both the best European and American experience, is Elmhaven in New Haven, Conn., designed by Douglas Orr and R. W. Foote, with Albert Mayer as consultant. This project combines both the openness of the *Zeilenbau* plan with the court or quadrangle forms. Both two and three-story structures are carefully designed in harmony, and the project is orderly and simple in its layout. While much of the detail lacks finish, it is hard to find any other urban project in the country which creates such a satisfactory sense of belonging where it is, and of solving so many of the architectural phases of a housing problem.

There are hundreds of projects which could be mentioned with praise—delightful little one-story row houses in pastel shades to be found wound among the tall straight pine trees at Wilmington, N. C., or Burnham Hoyt's Las Casitas, overlooking the valley of the South Platte at Denver, or Riverside Terrace, Paterson, N. J., or Brentwood Park in Jacksonville, Fla., with its simple one-and two-story units, neat and orderly under the pines. Our cities are beginning to blossom with these bright new little low-cost communities. Their fashionable and more expensive counterparts are

also flowering. Of the latter, mention should be made of two Los Angeles projects worthy of praise—the pleasant Wyvernwood Garden Apartments with its very simple, almost classical white buildings and great sense of space and lawn; and Baldwin Hills Village, also a huge but well-planned and attractive development. Two samples of the many less satisfactory are such projects as Interlaken, at Eastchester, N. Y., with its beautiful site overlooking a 67-acre lake, but badly attacked by a rash of pseudo-Regency veneer; or Elen-tamgy Village at Columbus, Ohio, which plays havoc with Williamsburg and the memory of our forebears. Unfortunately, the more expensive the project and the more fashionable its location, the more the architect seems to find it necessary to lard his already fat duck. He would do well to read Thorstein Veblen's remarkable chapter, "The Pecuniary Canons of Taste" in "The Theory of the Leisure Class."

Of course, it would be a great mistake to forget to mention the importance of the plan of Radburn, N. J., by the late Henry Wright, which turns the American community inside out, and the basic considerations of which are to be found in nearly every modern housing project in the United States, whether publicly or privately financed. By the creation of the superblock with peripheral traffic, inner pedestrian ways, and

the service penetration theory utilizing the dead-end street, architects and site planners were able to achieve a greater flexibility of layout. This is due largely to the fact that it was possible to abandon the typical gridiron street pattern to be found in nearly all of our large cities, and to design with large-scale units and greater freedom. Mr. Lescaze at Williamsburg Houses, New York, an early example of experiment with site layout, completely broke away from any previous form of plan, and although he did not achieve a satisfactory simplicity of elements to create harmony, he was able to gain greatly in the sense of space.

As the design of housing projects became less foreign to our architects, they began to gain sureness and a directness of approach which has in many cases succeeded in achieving as good results as the best European projects, and in some cases have far outstripped them. Perhaps one cannot properly make comparisons, since European and American habits of living have many points of disparity. Greenbelt, Md., built by the Suburban Resettlement Administration, and Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles, a Federal Housing Administration limited - dividend - rental project designed by Reginald Johnson and Associates with the famous housing architect, Clarence Stein, as consultant (Stein also was responsible for much of the site plan-

ning layout of Greenbelt and Radburn and many other projects), can both be said to be superlative examples of good community planning, taking full advantage of the new freedom which has been developed in residential area planning. No photographs can give the sense of domestic scale, of sunlight and air, of complete three dimensions, and of homelike charm which are to be found in these carefully designed, huge but not monumental structures.

Even a *tour de force* such as the incredibly gigantic Parkchester in New York City achieves something of a unity and dramatic intensity by having been created at one time as a single piece of architecture and community design. To some of us, this project is the *ne plus ultra* in crowding the land and achieving for the inhabitants there the ultimate in urban anonymity. May we be spared more of the same! For it must go without saying that housing design to be esthetically satisfying should never lose human scale and a quality of residence. To lose these is to lose the very purpose for which this form of architecture and this part of city planning is intended. Cities are for people, and residences are for people to live in. If we are to maintain and develop and build great cities and great people in the cities, their environment must be such that it not only proves an inspiration and satisfaction to them,

but it must also be considered as a framework within which their daily lives can function smoothly and pleasantly.

During the past few years there has been a swing away from Daniel Burnham's form of urban esthetics, and there has been a healthy tendency to belittle the monumental facade. However, we have swung too far in ignoring the importance of beauty and charm; in fact we are inclined to blush at the words. In our desire to be he-men in a thoroughly rough-and-tumble and unpleasant world, our tendency has been to belittle one of those elements so necessary to the human psyche which has given the most enduring meaning to the word civilization. Some strange quirk in the savagery of war has prevented the total destruction of Rome and Florence, largely because of the beauty of these cities.

Can we, by the farthest stretch of the imagination, suppose that the savagery of an enemy on our soil would in any way be abated by the appearance of our American cities as they are today? Hardly. For we are too young to have created history which is emotionally a part of the history of other cultures, and we are too unbeautiful, despite our magnificence, to even call a sentimental halt before the iridescent bubble is shattered. In time we may hope that buildings themselves become less important, and that cities as a whole become more. One should be able

to say of our cities that they are beautiful places in which to live, that the homes of their people, their gardens and open spaces are of such singular attraction and beauty that not only the inhabitants themselves take pride in main-

taining these communities, but that the transgressors of peace would hesitate before striking at them. Our cities ultimately must demonstrate a way of life which cannot be improved upon either by conquest or time. . . .

The Producers' Council

Recently elected to membership in The Producers' Council are the following organizations, with the names of their Official Representatives:

The Schaible Company, 1086 Summer St., Cincinnati, O., Sidney A. Millikin, Manager of Distribution; George F. Carr, Cincinnati Sales Representative, alternate.

Marble Institute of America, R. A. Colonna, President, East River

at 140th St., New York City; F. J. Plimpton, alternate.

General Motors Competition

ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED to close on April 16, the General Motors Design Competition for Dealer Establishments will now close a month later, May 16, according to a supplementary announcement from the Professional Adviser, George Nelson.

Temples of Southern India

THE illustrations on pages 139, 140 and 157 represent a style and period of architecture with which the architects of the Western world have had little acquaintance. Although some temples in Southern India date from before the time of Christ, most of them were built during a period of nine hundred years, from 900 to 1800 A.D. A tremendous spiritual and mythological motivation must have lain behind the conception and

building of these numerous and sometimes vast temples, and behind the elaborate ceremonies conducted in and about them. The areas covered in certain examples by temple, courts, pools, *vimana* (towers over the sanctuaries), *gopurams* (towers over the gateways) and other outlying elements, compare with the great temple areas of Thebes in Egypt and the central Pagoda of Peking in China. At Srirangam, illustrated on page 157,

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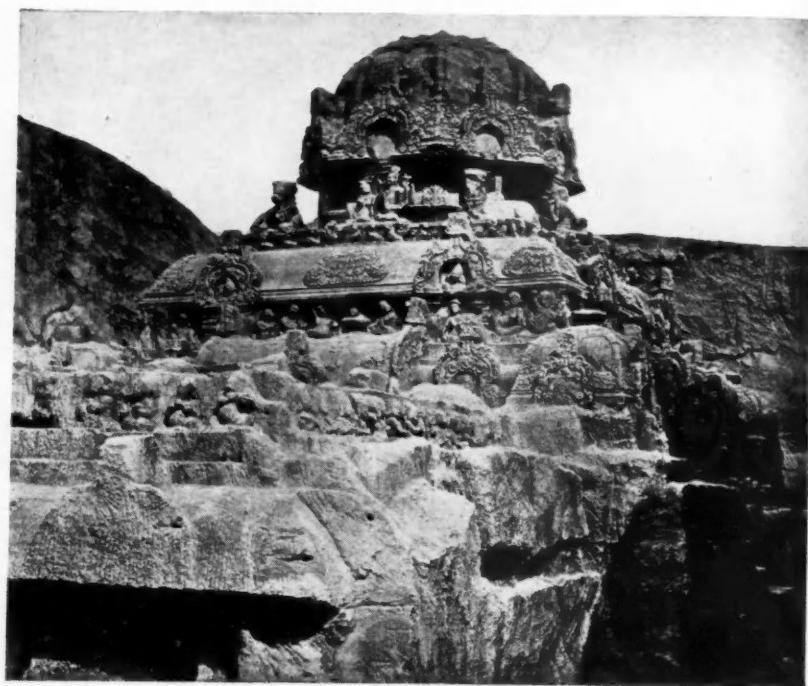
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ROCK TEMPLE AT KALOOGOMULLA HAMLET
SOUTHERN INDIA

On the right is the door, but the interior was left entirely un-finished, not a figure having been carved on any part of it

the area covered is nearly four miles in circumference, with a principal entrance facing each of the cardinal points.

Incidentally, these photographs were made when photography was in its infancy, by a Captain Lyon

of Her Majesty's 68th Regiment of Light Infantry, in the years 1863-69, apparently using 11"x14" glass plates. The examples illustrated are from an extensive collection in the library of William Gehron, F.A.I.A., New York City.

Last Call for Chippendale

By T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings

Excerpts from a talk before The Architectural League of New York, March 1, 1945.

ONCE UPON A TIME—but not very long ago — a man called Mr. Riebeth had a very excellent idea. Mr. Riebeth was the home maintenance editor of the Minneapolis *Star Journal* and a great many readers wrote a great many letters telling him of their household troubles.

As well as keeping up a terrific stream of "how to do it" hints and short cuts for keeping war-weary houses in the pink, Mr. Riebeth made a collection of what he thought were the more humorous inquiries. This collection, as you might well imagine, has, over the years, mounted to a veritable saga of the annoyances, the minor tragedies, and the catastrophes which dog the home-owner, the house-keeper, and her family.

Among the most treasured gems of this bypath of literature, is a letter from a reader which says: "Dear Mr. Riebeth: my husband

has a beautiful secretary that is giving him trouble. The legs keep coming loose."

This idea of Mr. Riebeth's seems to me a very admirable one; and from time to time, whenever I have found items that seem, shall we say, to extend the horizons of furniture designers and decorators, I have filed such items away for occasions such as this one tonight.

One of these items concerned the activities of a small girl in a New York borough, which shall remain nameless. It seems, after the entire fire brigade had come scampering from all directions and finally doused a spanking household blaze, it was discovered that it had been started by the family pixie, aged twelve, who said she despised her parents' atrocious ideas on decoration, and was humiliated by it when she brought friends in. This juvenile fire-bug was quite rightly whisked off to a

psychiatrist, who, after probing and groping around into what he expected to be an inferno of suppressed pyromania, was finally forced to admit that the child was as normal as they come.

This opens up quite terrifying vistas into the future. Such a child martyr might become canonized, and the patron saint of other tender mites, who, inspired by similar agitations, might take one look at momma's latest bit of Biedermeier, and calmly reach for the matches.

Since that date, things have been relatively quiet, though it has been suggested that the New York fire squad should subscribe from now on to *House Beautiful* and *Better Homes and Gardens* as a means of weighing any suspicions they may have when future household fires seem without apparent cause.

If blame for this juvenile revolution is to be laid on any particular doorstep, we might with some justice plank it down on the revolving entrances of our better department stores, where the steady business of merchandising momma has reached a crescendo of chaos that would be dismissed as delirium tremens in more normal times.

Put together war shortages, surrealism, and the creative faculties flying blind, and anything can happen. In the home furnishings departments, it usually did.

The first valiant Wartime efforts to maintain a steady pace in three-piece Hepplewhite—slip covers—and a cozy assortment of pine and

maple, soon began to pall, and feelers were put out for a possible splurge in Mexicana, South Americana, and a source somewhat vaguely described as "East Indian."

"Ideas aren't rationed" trumpeted R. H. Macy, flinging open to the public a hundred-room exhibition orgy of whimsy based on these outposts of decoration, which had inspired amongst other things colors described as "henna duck," "persimmon red" and "grocery blue," to say nothing of a "built-in-bar with doors that open like a peon's casa, half at a time."

This clarion call to the hitherto suppressed inventive genius lying fallow in the corner shoppe of a thousand department stores, was the signal for the beginning of a mass movement bent on similar whimsical clambakes.

Lord & Taylor announced a dressing-table made from an old monkey's cage, and put the curse on R. H. Macy by flinging back in their face a bar made from an antique sedan chair. Marshall Field, tagging along, opened something it described rashly as Gingham House, with old-fashioned stoves to hold potted plants, and bookcases of gingham. Since no holds were barred, Carson Pirie & Scott waded in with tables made from cemetery urns, and a dressing-table constructed from a Victorian umbrella stand. This was too much for Altman's, who, goaded into madness, retaliated with walls decorat-

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ed with garden implements. Punch drunk, but still in pitching, Lord & Taylor came back with an old-fashioned bathtub under a canopy of red satin, with a plumed circus horse attached to it by a harness of vermillion ribbons.

By this time, the contagion was spreading, and true to its legendary wildness, the West Coast was soon running amok. In Los Angeles, the May Company put on view a series of "Alice rooms for grown-ups." Only in Hollywood, apparently, could a maturity be found which could face undaunted a meal in a dining-room called the "Mad-Hatter's Tea Party," or a quiet rubber of bridge in a "Jabberwocky Room." Nor, apparently, did the West Coast elders blanch at the idea of retiring into sleeping quarters archly labeled "The King and Queen of Hearts," in which blue and fuschia taffeta was draped around chairs in the form of bustles.

Soon news was coming in from all quarters. At Atlanta, the Davidson Paxon Company blazoned forth with rooms called "Victorian goes shocking," the high spot of which was a "baby's crib made from an antique dough tray," a suggestion that conjures up fragrant visions of absent-minded Southern mothers kneading their offspring into a mass of shortening bread.

By this time Chicago had got its second wind, and Carson Pirie & Scott, with a wild look in its eye, announced "The Little House

with Rural Rhythm." The entrance to this bucolic nightmare was hung with "an old-fashioned iron dinner bell with rope attached." Inside, against walls of raspberry red, was a staircase on which—and I quote—was "an old gun with bayonet attached, serving as a handrail." Let any over-boisterous tomboy try sliding down that particular handrail and see where it gets her.

The living-room, I need hardly tell you, was crowded with what Carson Pirie & Scott called "novel touches," which is always a dangerous sign. In this case they included "lamps made from old coffee mills, whose cranks still turn"; "a cranberry picker utilized as a magazine stand"; and finally, to crown the ensemble, "a coal hod appears as a wastepaper basket."

Not to be outdone by Chicago, Newark, N. J. flung down its gauntlet, with Bamberger & Company opening a "Charm Home Bath Shop", and yelling at the top of its voice, "Is this is—or is this ain't—a bath shop?"

At this point, the original old masters of corner-shop whimsy, R. H. Macy, decided to stage a hell-for-leather comeback, and flung wide, as of old, the doors of a Mid-winter Show that featured as its chef d'oeuvre a "Mother and Daughter Cottage." "Imagine," said Macy's, and I quote their own words, "Imagine paintings that open down over twin couches and turn out to be bed trays."

In case the imagination of customers boggled at this stupendous idea, Macy's had other cards up their corner-shop sleeves, and once again I quote their own words: "Brood," said R. H. Macy, "Brood upon butterflies reeling on the ceiling of a living-sleeping room."

With the fires of genius burning like beacons from coast to coast, and while Macy's customers brooded on butterflies, newspapers and magazines took up the hue and cry. Leading the chase came the New York *World-Telegram*, with an article called "The Art of Flossing up a Room." This witches' brew for the new interior decoration included such ingredients as valentines, theatre programs, and bar-room swinging-doors.

House & Garden, genteel but bright as a penny, and determined to appear young at all costs, suggested, in tune with the times, a room of wet leaf green, a doll chest for a side table, and cigarettes and matches helter-skelter in a Victorian chicken dish.

Finally *Vogue*, screaming like a banshee at being left out of all this lovely fun, hurried into print with the suggestion that chandeliers "be swathed in shocking pink mosquito netting", fireplaces be painted with "big pouting cabbage roses," and floors be "squooshed with sponges full of chartreuse paint.."

As usual in these matters, the *New Yorker* had the last word to say, and announced that after surveying the surrealist Victorian in

our furniture departments, it had composed a poem called "Make Mine Grand Rapids."

Certain sober citizens, bolting their doors at night against this wartime delirium, turned with hope to the report issued by the John B. Pierce Foundation called "Family Living as the Basis for Dwelling Design." Here at least, was a seemingly sober approach to the confusion that stalked abroad. Alas for human optimism; after a painstaking nation-wide research, the findings — revealing though they may be about the more intimate secrets of family living—offer no solution to dwelling design.

In yet another poll conducted to determine why men get up in the night, it was discovered that only 2.4 per cent had to get up; 1.6 per cent went prowling around the kitchen to find something to eat. The other 96 per cent, it seemed, got up to go home.

In this same spirit of research into the private lives of the citizenry in their nocturnal moments, 47 per cent of the wives said they slept on their stomachs, which from the point of view of interior design tells us nothing of the kind of beds they prefer to sleep on their stomachs on.



Now to turn from my scrapbook to more serious things. Obviously the moment has gone when one need embark in further discussions of antique furniture and antique

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architecture *vs.* contemporary furniture and contemporary architecture. On the other hand, the moment has come when we need to discuss what is good contemporary architecture and furniture, and what is bad contemporary architecture and furniture.

I hope and believe that the architecture which will predominate in America after the War will stem from the hundred-year-old tradition of contemporary American architecture which started with the thinking of Horatio Greenough in the 1840's. It was he who expounded the philosophy that form should follow function, and it was the thinking of this pioneer that culminated in the Chicago School of the 'nineties, with Louis Sullivan, and which has come to such magnificent fruition in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and his younger followers.

I believe and hope that American furniture designers will also work in the spirit of this great tradition, and that the furniture they design will be suitable for use with this type of architecture.

I say this because I believe that the so-called international architecture is completely alien to the American ideology. The theory, for instance, as expounded by Le Corbusier, that the house is a "machine for living", can never be sympathetically received by Americans, however exciting the idea may seem to a small group of Neo-European intellectuals. Nor do I

think the approach to architecture and furniture as expounded by the elite of the German Bauhaus can be other than completely alien to a democratic country. The mystical doctrines of Expressionism, Abstractionism, Surrealism, and Dadaism, with which the thinking of the Bauhaus elite is so heavily permeated, to say nothing of the Marxian ideology that is mixed up with it, are also alien to the American ideal.

This type of thinking, with its overtones of Nietzschean Superman mythology, is a far cry from the simple, healthy, turning-to-nature-for-inspiration that is the basis for contemporary American architecture and furniture.



The sooner those who have the interests of American architecture and furniture at heart realize it, the better it will be for American architecture and furniture.

No American man or woman, setting about the business of making a home for themselves and family, would ever visualize it in terms of tubular steel furniture, or a general atmosphere of Prussian regimentation. They will visualize it in terms of warmth, friendliness and comfort, where the furniture and the architecture serve the family—rather than the architecture and furniture serving as a means of expounding the dogmas of a would-be cultural Germanic elite.



Bigger and Better Conventions

By Louis Justement

THE way to have bigger, better A.I.A. conventions is to make them smaller. This somewhat paradoxical conclusion was suggested to me by the current Wartime necessity of limiting the attendance to fifty—and by a realization of my own timidity in addressing gatherings of three or four hundred people. I have attended many A.I.A. conventions but, like most of the other delegates, I have rarely spoken. Within the meetings of the chapter, however, I would perhaps be criticized for being too irrepressible. If this feeling of intimidation by large audiences were a purely personal idiosyncracy on my part I would let it go at that. But I am convinced that most of the delegates to the A.I.A. conventions have experienced this same handicap: how else explain the fact that among 300 or more delegates it is rare that more than fifteen members participate in the debate? Was it necessary for these delegates to travel hundreds or thousands of miles merely to vote yes or no?

At this point many members will say that, of course, their primary interest at the convention is the opportunity it affords for meeting

their colleagues, and not the relatively dry business proceedings. A small group might be ever so much more efficient, but much of the pleasure we now find in these annual gatherings would be lost. Before concluding that we must choose between the advantages of small conventions and those of large conventions, let us see if they cannot be combined.

Let us suppose that delegates are elected on the present basis of representation and that from the delegates so elected a total of fifty should be qualified as business delegates. Each region would select its proportionate share of these business delegates from among the regularly elected delegates who had indicated a desire to serve in this capacity. For selection as a business delegate would carry with it certain duties and responsibilities as well as certain privileges. The business meetings of the convention would be hard-working gatherings attended by men who are interested in the many ramifications of the professional organization and not disposed to brush business aside on the basis of a committee report. The smaller attendance would actually be more representative of the

entire membership: a meeting of fifty delegates in which fifteen members participate—if we think of the presentation of ideas on a purely arithmetical basis. We all know, moreover, that the ability to speak to large audiences is not necessarily related to the quality of the ideas so expressed. Would it not be better to devise a convention mechanism that facilitated debate on the basis of the value of the ideas of the delegate? In view of the fact that the business delegates would carry on the real work of the convention and would have little time for play, it would seem proper that they be reimbursed for traveling expenses, and this would not represent an excessive drain on the chapter treasury.

The other delegates would all pay their own way and be charged with relatively little specific responsibility to their chapters. Their function would be that of participating in numerous round-table groups organized for the purpose of discussing various phases of professional activity in which relatively small groups are intensely interested, and which cannot be intelligently discussed in a big meeting; city-planning, housing, construction finance, architectural design, public works, etc. This is an important part of convention activities, not because of any resolutions that may be considered, but for the opportunity it affords for an interchange of ideas among architects from all over the coun-

try. The time allowed for round-table discussions will be utterly inadequate if it consists merely of one or two luncheon meetings sandwiched in between business meetings.

The evening sessions could be carried on in accordance with our present procedure. They would afford the opportunity for both classes of delegates as well as the general public to join in the pursuit of pleasure or knowledge. The round-table variety of delegate could also participate in the elections for officers without disturbing the deliberations of the business delegates.

Under the procedure that I have outlined it would be possible for the business of the convention to be considered earnestly and seriously by men who are interested in this phase. Even the skilled public speaker will frequently hesitate to say more than a few words at a full-size convention meeting, because he realizes that this miscellaneous aggregation of architects is to a large extent bored with the proceedings — furthermore, there simply isn't time for debate. The equally important round-table discussions will not be slighted. Finally, there will be ample opportunity for purely social gatherings of colleagues. I believe that we may thus preserve and enhance the utility and pleasure we now find in conventions—when limitations on travel are removed and we are permitted to roam around the country at will.

Saving Europe's Art

IN TWO PARTS—PART II

By Charles Rufus Morey

MARQUAND PROFESSOR OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Adapted from the magazine *Art News*, and cleared through the Office of War Information. Part I dealt with the organization of the effort.

THE Advisers on Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives got under way at the close of the Sicilian invasion. Sicily suffered remarkably little during the sharp and fierce campaign that ranged through some of its most important sites, as considered from the cultural point of view. Palermo escaped unscathed, and the earthquake and fire of 1908 had left little of ancient Messina for war to ruin.

South Italy was harder hit, especially Benevento and Naples, where much of the first-aid work of the Advisers was concentrated until the fighting moved farther north. The need for it can be seen in photographs published in newspapers and art magazines of the badly wrecked Cathedral of Benevento and of seriously damaged Neapolitan churches. In Naples forty churches were bombed, twenty-six of which, including all the most seriously hurt, were recently reported in process of rehabilitation or restoration, with eventual aid for most of the others provided for. At Benevento not only was a considerable part of the Cathedral destroyed, but about

thirty of the seventy-two panels of its famous bronze doors, the principal objects of art in Benevento, were severely damaged, the subject panels suffering far more heavily than the numerous figures of bishops. Six panels are noted as missing altogether. At the same time one can take comfort from the extraordinary survival of some treasures in these very sites; at Benevento, for instance, the sandbags on the Arch of Trajan saved it from a bomb-hit directly in front of it.

Benevento's losses, and those of Naples, were due in part to the accidents of bombing, both Allied and German, with some vicious exceptions. One of these was the burning of the library of the Royal Society in Naples in reprisal for the shooting of a German soldier. Another most scandalous act of vandalism, with the most tragic consequences for scholarship, was the burning of the Naples State Archives by a detachment of German troops. Dr. Riccardo Conte Filangieri, State Archivist, has written a detailed report covering the removal of the archives from Naples, the events leading up to

the removal of the archives and the attempt made to save the documents even at the last minute.

In November, 1943, our enemies took pains to remove the contents of Monte Cassino to Rome, with much publicity. These contents were noteworthy in the extreme: they included the finest objects of the Naples Museum, stored there by its directors at the outset of the Allied invasion, and the treasures of the monastery of Montevergine near Avellano and of the museum of S. Martino at Naples, as well as the 10,000 volumes and manuscripts of the Monte Cassino library itself. "Enough of art objects was left," said the Berlin *Borsenzeitung*, "to satisfy the lust for destruction of an uncultured gangsterdom." This may be taken as a rather clumsy Nazi prevarication, and one may rest assured that however regrettable was the necessity of destroying this holy site, the buildings of the monastery had been emptied both of their monastic inmates and their treasures, and were in themselves of relatively modern date and artistically unimportant.

What the Germans have failed to explain in connection with the art objects removed for safety from Monte Cassino is the disappearance of some of the most valuable paintings of the Naples Museum.

As the Allied Armies moved north from Monte Cassino to Rome, grave damage was done to

many towns along the Appian Way and the Via Casalina, Gaeta, Cori, Velletri and Palestrina being among the heavy sufferers. In the environs of Rome, several of the notable villas at Frascati, including the Aldobrandini, the Falconieri, and the Lancellotti were badly hurt, and at Tivoli one wing of the Villa d'Este was bombed. North of Rome, damage to works of art has been far less serious than might have been expected.

Viterbo, however, in proportion to its size and the importance of its monuments, has suffered more than any other Italian city during the War, even more than Naples and Palermo. Very serious damage has been done to the Cathedral and to the churches of San Francesco, San Sisto, Sta. Maria della Verita and San Giovanni in Zoccoli.

San Gimignano, on the contrary, and despite press reports, has, with one serious exception, been little touched. All of its thirteen famous towers are still standing and intact. The Collegiata has, however, been hit and three frescoes by Barna de Siena damaged.

Assisi and Perugia have come through the War unscathed. The principal monuments of Florence, in spite of the destruction at either end of the Ponte Vecchio and the demolition of all the remaining bridges across the Arno, have survived the War essentially unharmed. In Pisa, the Leaning Tower, the Duomo and the Baptistry are virtually untouched, as

are most of the other great monuments. An unfortunate exception to this was the burning of the lead-sheathed roof of the Campo Santo which, in caving in, dropped burning timbers and molten lead on the frescoes and sculptures below.

Throughout Italy there has so far been almost no damage to classical remains.



An amusing German fabrication was the solemn announcement by a Berlin broadcaster that the new Commission was headed by a well-known "art-trust" in New York, and organized for the looting of the art treasures of Italy and their distribution among American millionaires. This would correspond fairly well to the actual German arrangement for the "protection" of cultural treasures in Russia, where a special commando was attached to the army of invasion, intrusted with the task of collecting and shipping to Germany the contents of art collections, libraries, and scientific laboratories. The destruction in Russia has been very bad indeed. The palaces at Peterhof have been gutted. Detskoye, formerly the palace of Tsarkoye Selo, was first looted, then burned. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* published in January, 1942 a rather bald admission of German guilt in the latter affair, saying, "In the art collections of the Schloss at Koenigsberg the famous Amber Room, saved by German soldiers from the

destroyed Palace of Catherine at Tsarkoye Selo, is now on exhibition." Kiev has lost some of its finest churches; one of the outstanding monuments of Novgorod, the Saviour church at Nereditza, with its frescoes of the twelfth century, is gone.

The vindictiveness of this vandalism in Russia is only surpassed by the thoroughgoing organized Nazi havoc in Poland, which reveals a planned purpose to destroy Polish culture and Polish tradition along with Polish geography. Polish archives have been sought out and burned, the monuments of Polish heroes—Kosciusko at Lodz, the poet Michiewicz at Cracow—have been pulled down, Polish schools and universities closed and their teachers put in concentration camps. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* in March, 1941 gives an eye-witness account of one incident in this devilish crusade: "For us it was a special pride to destroy the Talmudic Academy (the Jewish Theological Seminary at Lublin), which had been known as the greatest in Poland. We threw out of the building the great Talmudic library and carted it to the market-place. There we set fire to the books. The fire lasted for twenty hours. The Jews of Lublin were assembled and cried bitterly. Their cries almost silenced us. Then we summoned the military band and the joyful shouts of the soldiers silenced the Jewish cries."

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west, destruction of some cultural treasures has been inevitable with the huge increase in Allied bombing, despite careful briefing and accurate sighting. Also, reports of damage in Cologne and Munich indicate that in the Rhenish city it seems certain that the Romanesque churches are ruined, and the German claim that 500,000 volumes, including 50,000 manuscripts, have been lost in Munich libraries. This may, however, be a purposeful exaggeration, since the total of books destroyed by bombing up to August, 1943 was estimated by German sources to be 3,000,000.

In spite of the bitter fighting for the liberation of France, it is now apparent that damage to monuments and cultural treasures have been less than one had at first reason to fear. Precision bombing and carefully directed artillery fire managed to spare the greatest monuments in even what are now the most devastated regions. It has been estimated that actual physical damage in France during this war amounts to only one-fifth of that done during World War I.

In Caen where a giant see-saw battle went on for weeks, both the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames, as well as St. Nicholas and St. Pierre, have been saved. The Cathedral of Coutances, around which one of the most destructive battles of the War was waged, has emerged unscathed. Likewise the great Cathedral of

Chartres, situated near an important and oft-bombarded aerodrome, is practically intact. The Gothic tracery on the north tower bears a few scars from bullets which struck during a brief fight to dislodge snipers left behind by the retreating German Army. Photographs also show that Mont-Saint-Michel and the Cathedral of Rheims are untouched. The City of Paris with all its monuments, excepting the Palais du Luxembourg which the Germans used as a military installation, has also come through its liberation unharmed. Only its industrial suburbs bear the scars of war.

The worst fears for the great French national collections, occasioned by the ill-disguised theft of the Ghent Altar-piece (the Adoration of the Lamb, by Van Eyck), certain "cultural exchanges" and the looting of private collections, were happily not realized. It has been authoritatively reported that not only the Louvre repositories but also those of other public collections are intact. An exception to this is two thousand items of the Napoleonic period which were removed from the Musée de l'Armée at the Hotel des Invalides. Single works, the Bayeux Tapestry, the Basle Altar Frontal, the Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo have been specifically mentioned as unharmed and in French possession. Even certain of the great private collections entrusted to the Louvre by their owners have apparently

been saved from German "collectors."

This good news is not the result of mere good fortune. Credit must go to the monuments officers and others of the Allied Armies who worked carefully from previously prepared maps and lists to spot and avoid the great monuments in both artillery and bombing operations. Credit must also go to the many efficient and courageous French officials who carefully stored and guarded the treasures entrusted to their care. In France, Belgium and Holland many cultural casualties are mainly the result of looting under guise of confiscation and forced sales. This has occasioned an extraordinary increase in the acquisition of Dutch and Flemish paintings on the part of German galleries, according to the complacent reports of these institutions, and a marked frequency of these items in the advertised auctions. However, news coming now from the Netherlands would seem to indicate that there, as well as in France, the great public art collections may have been spared. At Maastricht, the principal repository of the Ryks Museum of Amsterdam has been found intact ac-

cording to a recent report. Rembrandt's Night Watch has been specifically mentioned as being among these works.

The second objective of the Commission and its working committee is the "salvaging and returning to their lawful owners" of looted objects of art. The equipping of the monument officers with the data necessary for their task is the immediate and short-range sanction of the Commission's organization; the immense job of monumental restoration in devastated areas, and the undoing of Nazi thievery, is the second, with a long and difficult perspective ahead of it. But the "Committee on the Preservation of Cultural Treasures in War Areas" of the American Council of Learned Societies is busy assembling at the Frick Library in New York, where space and facilities have been granted it for the duration, the information on both loss and looting that will serve, when peace comes, as groundwork for at least the initial stage of the huge task of rehabilitating the cultural tradition of war-torn Europe.

"The past is an example of what not to do in another epoch, in another climate, for another client. When profound analysis takes the place of mere ecstatic enthusiasm, the respect for the past is greater, more sincere, and less artificial."—JEAN LABATUT.

APRIL, 1945

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Honors to Architects

AT A RECENT MEETING the New York Chapter, A.I.A., honored five of its members who have distinguished themselves outside of the profession. The citations follow, to each of which were added the words "The Chapter hereby expresses its appreciation of these services which have contributed to the prestige of the profession."

ARCHIBALD MANNING BROWN, F.A.I.A.—Equally distinguished as architect of residential buildings and of low-cost housing groups, he has recently completed a term of service as architect member of the Art Commission of the City of New York. His suggestions to the architects submitting work to the Commission, always given with tact and sympathetic understanding, have served invariably to improve the designs of public buildings.

DANIEL PAUL HIGGINS — Public-spirited member of our profession, director and trustee of several banks and institutions of public welfare. He is a member of the Board of Education of the City of New York, and as Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Sites is in charge of its great post-War planning program, in which

he has encouraged participation by architects in private practice. Regardless of his desire to be relieved of these arduous duties, he has agreed, at the insistence of the Mayor, to serve another term of seven years on the Board of Education.

ERNEST FLAGG, F.A.I.A.—Active practitioner in New York City for over half a century; architect of Saint Luke's Hospital and of the Singer Building in New York, of the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington and of many buildings at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. He is distinguished also for his studies in housing and for his research in building materials and methods of construction, forever striving to bring buildings of better design and better construction within the economic grasp of the average citizen. He has met every problem of his long career with courage, imagination and energy. An outstanding example of the full and fruitful life possible to an architect.

JACQUES ANDRE FOUILHOUX, F.A.I.A.—Architect of many distinguished buildings of international renown. Competent designer, sensitive engineer, and gen-

erous servant of the architectural profession. At the expense of time and energy, which only one rich in ability and experience could possibly afford, he has accepted the leadership of the construction industry in New York City — the Presidency of the New York Building Congress.

WALLACE KIRKMAN HARRISON
—Having represented the architectural profession with distinction as architect member of the Art

Commission of the City of New York, and having held many other positions of importance in the fields of education and public relations, he then served the United States Government as Assistant and later as Deputy Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in the Office of Emergency Management. He is now a member of the Advisory Committee on Art of the Cultural Relations Division of the Department of State.

Michigan and Unification

By Branson V. Gamber, F.A.I.A.

THE architects of Michigan have long directed their thought and action towards unification of the profession. They have subscribed to the principle that unification is a democratic institution, and that, through its functioning as such, the architects can be united in one strong, national organization, representing the entire profession.

They believe that unification simply means the establishment of a single organization in which all members have equal rights and privileges. They hold that every registered architect should have the right to join such an organization, and to remain a member as long as he subscribes and adheres to the principles and standards established by that organization.

The Michigan Society of Arch-

itects was organized more than thirty years ago. The Michigan Chapter of The American Institute of Architects was founded twenty-five years earlier, and subsequently became the Detroit Chapter, A.I.A. The Grand Rapids Chapter came into being about twenty years ago. As a preliminary step towards unification, the Michigan Society of Architects became a State Association Member of the Institute in 1933.

A Joint Committee on Unification of the Michigan Society of Architects and the two Institute chapters in Michigan has worked for years to accomplish unification in this state. A member of that committee has also served on the Institute committee.

The goal is now within reach, with more than eighty per cent of

the active members of the Michigan Society of Architects enrolled as corporate members of the A.I.A.

Certain legal technicalities are involved in permitting a state chapter of the A.I.A. to become incorporated in Michigan. It is not anticipated that these will be too difficult to overcome. In the meantime, an interim arrangement is provided, so that unification may function practically. A director to

the board of the Michigan Society of Architects is elected from each of the two chapters.

The final plan is to establish a state-wide Chapter of The A.I.A., with branch or local divisions. The majority of the members favor this plan, which is also the published recommendation of the Institute's committee, and which is approved by the A.I.A Board of Directors.

Cooperative Community Ownership

By Henry K. Holsman, F.A.I.A.

Excerpts from an address to the Cook County, Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs.

ON a hill top in the heart of Florida there is a tall, colorful "Singing Tower" surrounded by the Bock Bird Sanctuary, a garden of water, beaches, trees and flowers, bog and sand—a guarded community where birds may live and thrive without fear. . . .

Now the human home is a *Child Sanctuary*—a comfortable habitation in a safe, congenial environment, suitable for raising and training children. . . .

The design of the community is often more important than the design of the house itself. This has long been vaguely recognized, generally by restricting new developments to houses costing a certain minimum amount of money, with the unforeseen result that all the

houses are too big for the beginning families, too small when the family expands, and much too large when the children go away; but worst of all, the newly-weds are forced to leave their wealth-restricted community because all the houses are too large. The long-time result of such undemocratic planning is, first, neighborhood blight, then slums.

A democratic residential community plan should start with a Community Center. It should contain an all-purpose hall with lunch and refreshment facilities, preschool training, nursery and children's play facilities, adult recreation and game grounds, possibly some of the more intimate small stores and shops, perhaps a type of apartment hotel that may house

some household service specialists (not servants), and accommodate the occasional out-of-town guest, practically adding a "spare room" to the community homes. It should be the sociological heart of the community, and the revenue-producing elements should make community center facilities self-supporting.

The community should have a minimum of a thousand dwelling units, of all sizes and types, ranging from one to four bedrooms. The home should be arranged on curved private streets, avoiding rectangular monotony, and grouped in sub-communities of different grades. No one wants to live in a world where there are no superiors, nor where there are no inferiors, but natural cooperation and coordination should prevail from top to bottom.

All dwelling units and community facilities should be mutually owned by the residents and their successors, and managed by one fiduciary trust organization. The resident shareholders should lease their homes, or other facilities, from their fiduciary trustee.

Thus a family, having a complete proportionate interest in the entire community, may live in a small unit and change to a larger house, or vice versa, as needs demand, without migrating to a strange neighborhood. Nevertheless, the certificate of ownership and the lease being negotiable and entirely separate legally, co-owners

and cooperators may leave the community if necessary, without monetary loss, by arranging for a resale or a sub-lease to another family acceptable to the management.

Wealth restrictions could not protect the old community of individually owned homes from undesirable and misfit families. By the selective quality of a lease legally independent of mutual ownership, the management can, at any time, legally accept or reject residents on a basis of fitness and character. By such mutual ownership the community property values are maintained. Interest rates are reduced because the mortgage lender need not worry about the possible decline of his security because of neglect, or improper use of a neighboring house over which there is no control.

In the past, the intensive channelling of people's savings away from homebuilding into large, static, capital-accumulating devices has inadvertently reduced home ownership to a mere minority of the city's families, reduced effective home equity funds to near the vanishing point, and incidentally produced absentee landlords, uneconomic rents, urban blight and mental, moral and physical slums.

The Federal Housing Act, by insuring mortgages, lowering interest rates and raising first-mortgage limits, has somewhat relieved home mortgage loan restrictions, but even so beneficial a law harbors an incipient device for chan-

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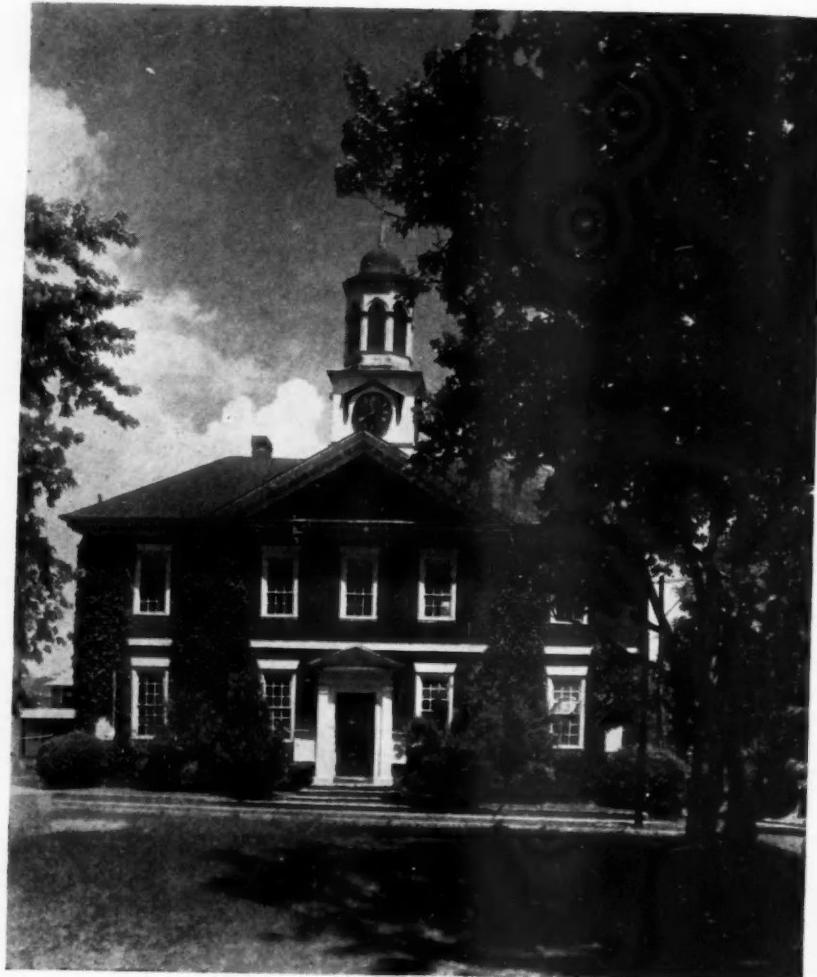
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TEMPLE AT SRIRANGAM, SOUTHERN INDIA
SHRINE OF RANGANADASWAMI

Largest in India, this temple is one of the latest in date, the fifth court having been left unfinished in the mid-eighteenth century. The shrine itself is insignificant compared to the *gopurams* or gateways to the various courts



Do you know this building?

*Journal
The AlA*

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CHOWAN COUNTY COURT HOUSE (1767)

ATTRIBUTED TO GILBERT LEICHH
EDENTON, N. C.

Photograph by Thomas T. Waterman

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neling people's savings into corporate holdings.

For example, the usual 80 to 90 per cent FHA rental housing loan to a required owner corporation, pays in full for the building, but the tenants pay it all back in required yearly amortization payments along with interest, taxes, dividends and operating expenses, in the rent; but when the tenants have thus paid for the building by excess savings, it still belongs to the corporation landlord, and the tenants' invisible savings have gone to the corporation.

When the cooperative (mutual owner) lessee pays off the mortgage, the property belongs to him, not to someone else. The author and several lawyers and trust officers have developed for universal use a combined and integrated Community Development Trust, a Mutual Ownership Trust, and a Donor's Trust, organized under the fiduciary laws of the state, to be administered by a Corporate Trustee and a Board of Managing Trustees professionally active in the specific phases of designing, financing, building and managing housing property. It is designed to be instrumental in diverting more of the people's savings directly into home equities, secure necessary low-rate mortgage funds, and help the people to build modest homes and pay for them with savings, without fear of loss or foreclosure. At the same time it can attract some beneficent donor trust funds and be-

quests and use them with fiduciary freedom of thought to help the City Plan Commission and other agencies to institute the above-mentioned and other economic and legal reforms.

Such a trusteeship has been demonstrated to be sound and practical during the past twenty-three years in six special mutual-ownership trust projects, all of which weathered the late ten-year depression without default or loss of dividends. In about one-half of these homes, the cooperating tenants, or their successors, having this year paid off the mortgage debt by merely paying market rents for twenty years, now own the property clear of debt, and in condition almost as good as new.

Here is what mutual ownership and cooperation can do for homes, compared to what individual ownership or renting does:

The mutual-ownership trust, operating on a wholesale basis, can buy property at lower cost per average house lot, pays but one overhead cost of title insurance, lawyers' service, surveyor's service for all the community homes, and can secure better architectural, engineering and landscape services at lower cost per house than can be obtained by an individual owner of a single house and lot.

The continuing cost of homes—replacements and repairs on house and grounds, often the cost of fuel, gas, light, refrigeration and waste disposal, can be acquired, and even,



just, real estate taxes, insurance and public services can be negotiated by the Trust, at lower cost per house than can usually be had by the individual home owners.

Perhaps the greatest advantages the trust ownership plan offers are: (a) the lower interest rates; (b) the freedom from foreclosure possibilities; (c) the prevention of depreciation of the house or the neighborhood; and (d) the reduction of the risk of loss, or the fear of loss, due to unexpected family adversity.

When purchasing a home on the mutual-ownership trust plan, the purchaser buys, not a deed to a single house, but a trust certificate of interest in the whole community, and a long-time lease on the home of his choice (eliminating the expense of a deed, title examination, survey, recorder's fees, etc.), entitling him to his proportionate share of all the net proceeds and owner-benefits derived from the entire property. He pays for his proportionate share of interest, taxes, insurance and, sometimes, electricity, gas and other fuel, city services, repairs, etc. at wholesale rates, in monthly payments on the lease. If he wishes to sell his ownership or borrow money on his proportionate interest, he may transfer his certificate of shares, or pledge his certification as collateral on a loan, without any of the expense of title examination, survey or recorder's fees.

Under the mutual-ownership

trust plan, one pays interest, taxes, amortization and operating expense in the form of rent, but only to the amount of the market rent, less the value of all repair, replacement, decorating, painting and other caretaking services he cares to furnish, or any economies he can achieve for himself. When his rental pays off the mortgage in fifteen to twenty-five years, the property he occupies, represented by his shares, belongs to him free and clear, instead of to a landlord.

The trust may rent or sell only to such home owners as can show to the management that they can properly afford the house of their choice and become good neighbors.

The trust may maintain a market for certificates of shares, so that if circumstances require the sale of the home at any time, the owner may be assured of a market at true value, possibly at a slight discount sufficient to pay the expenses.

The trust management is at all times controlled by a trust agreement and an impartial corporate trustee under the strict fiduciary laws of the state.

The mutual-ownership plan of purchase of a home is substantially an installment purchase plan, providing a rate of return and safety for savings investment that can hardly be equalled by any other form of liquid investment.

The cooperative benefits apply proportionately as well to apartment buildings as to larger communities of apartments and houses.



Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.



ART COMMISSIONS IN THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

BY PAUL P. CRET, F.A.I.A., Philadelphia

IN the February number of the JOURNAL, Mr. Justement unfolded the joys which will be ours in the City of Tomorrow. One of man's inalienable rights is to devise his own Utopia where, free from inhibitions, he introduces in abundance delights so parsimoniously "dished out" to us in the present imperfect society. I would be the last to spoil Mr. Justement's anticipated fun had he not, for the sake of trampling a straw man, selected the Commission of Fine Arts for a portrait which bears little resemblance to the model. He casts the Commission in the part of the villain, who thwarts "living art" on the shores of the Potomac, that is 'till the fifth act when, as should be expected, right triumphs and the duties to advise on matters of Art are taken from the hands of those who have some qualifications and entrusted to "the people" who have none. "The people's choice may be crude and ill-advised," says the author, but will undoubtedly greatly improve through the educational virtue of "television" (!!) in the days to come.

Mr. Justement tells us that "the City of Tomorrow, through the

ownership of its own land, will be provided with a simple legal instrument wherewith to control architectural design." In that New Jerusalem every building will have to meet the approval of a municipal art jury. Being myself an unfortunate member of such a jury, I confess that the prospect of having to pass on the thousands of submissions for new constructions sent a shiver down my spine. Fortunately, the author was not as unrelenting as I first feared: "Tempting as the thought may appear to those of us who are almost nauseated by the product of the average speculative builder . . . the control of architectural design is a matter which we cannot safely leave to the experts: if we rely on the experts we shall, no doubt, avoid extremes of bad taste, but we shall not create a living style." I breathed more freely, even if tempted to inquire: What more can be expected of a Jury than to prevent extremes of bad taste? Is it not a sufficient achievement? Mr. Justement's ambition, however, is higher: his idea of the judicial function is not to separate the goats from the sheep but, with the help

of eugenics, produce only the whitest lambs. Well, how are we to go about it? It is simple enough: "Don't entrust the control of architectural design to art experts, but to the People. The people's choice may be crude and ill-informed, perhaps, but it is a risk we shall have to take." Here, I felt uncomfortable again: had I got a reprieve from the hard labor of studying mountains of plans and specifications in my capacity as member of an Art Commission, only to find myself condemned as plain "John Citizen" to vote daily on these same projects? The rainbow arching over the City of Tomorrow began perceptibly to fade. The vision of a polling place cluttered with blueprints was disturbing. And what of the many citizens unable to read or visualize plans? Probably, in his benevolence, Mr. Justement would make it easier for them by requiring buildings to be erected first, then duly inspected by say six million New Yorkers, or a million Washingtonians, and if not accepted by the majority, to be at once ordered demolished.

Let us return to the Commission of Fine Arts, Exhibit A in this trial of experts. This "very able Commission" is guilty of having in the early years of its existence favored classical architecture for public buildings. The fact that they were thus acknowledging the trend of public taste during the first quarter of this century, and therefore made "the sort of choice which, in

a democracy should be based on popular opinion" has probably escaped Mr. Justement. Did he expect our predecessors on the Commission to have had in 1910 a Le Corbusieresque vision of things to come, and decline to approve all projects until the Apostles of Functionalism should come up to scratch, twenty years later? If we look at the decisions of recent years, Mr. Justement's criticisms are still more "injustemently" based, if I may be permitted a bad pun. The present Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts wrote some time ago:

"The strict and rigid compliance with the tenets of the classical school in architecture, which have obtained altogether too long in Washington, must be abandoned in favor of a more fresh approach to the problems which will confront the designers of new buildings in the future."

Six years ago the Commission fought in vain to obtain for the Jefferson Memorial a less stereotyped type of architecture. It would be monotonous to recount similar instances. Why did not Mr. Justement put side by side on a balance sheet the approval given to works where a free spirit is manifest (among which are examples offered by Mr. Justement himself), and on the other side of the ledger the list of submissions showing originality and talent which were rejected by the Commission? This would have been far more in-

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structive than vague recriminations in contradiction to the facts. I hasten to add that a Commission passing on matters of Art is bound to render decisions unpopular with many and particularly with the losing party. Our highest courts of law are now and then reversed by the Supreme Court, and esthetics never obtain agreement by a majority as does common law. Of our obfuscation, Mr. Justement's essay gives further proof as, for instance, in this sad comment:

"... standards have now been lost and we find ourselves bewildered and up-rooted." It is not our intention to follow him on his labyrinthine quest to devise "new standards of increasing subtlety."

Here is another case of that very prevalent disease of contemporary minds floundering in a morass of discarded rules, of dusty slogans and platitudes, and as a last resort invoking as supreme authority what has been called "le culte de l'incompetence."

A Single Voice for the Architectural and Engineering Professions

By Major Irving V. A. Huie

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, NEW YORK CITY

An address made at the 77th Anniversary Dinner
of the New York Chapter, A.I.A., February 14, 1945.

ARCHITECTURE, your profession, and engineering, my profession, through the ages have grown up together and are closely allied, one with the other. Together they are responsible for some of the greatest projects of this world—from the pyramids of Egypt and the Temple of Solomon to the modern overnight design and construction of super War plants.

A little research reveals that the professional separation of architecture and engineering is of comparatively recent origin. About the year 4000 B. C., for example, we

read about engineer-architects, who held positions of great power and influence, advising kings and having statues erected to their memories.

In the Middle Ages neither the term of architect nor engineer was used. Instead we find reference to master builders, most of whom had a knowledge of mathematics and a natural gift and skill for the direction of gangs of workmen.

During the Renaissance we can first detect a cleavage between the architect and the engineer. The architect-engineer, or the builder-

architect, was being replaced by an artist and an engineer. The title engineer, of course, up to the middle of the eighteenth century, was identified almost exclusively with the military, that is, the construction of fortifications and implements of war. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new class of engineers came into being, who were concerned with works other than those of a military nature, and these became known as civil engineers. Later, civil engineers, who specialized in the purely mechanical part of their profession, became known as mechanical engineers, and the formation of other groups on a functional basis followed, such as mining, electrical, chemical, metallurgical, automotive, radio and many others.

The high point in the purely esthetic role of the architect seems to have been reached about a century ago when Ruskin, in his "Seven Lamps of Architecture," confines the work of the architect to "only those characteristics of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use." Ruskin's position seems inconsistent to me since, in the introduction to that work, he discusses the subject of architecture and refers to it as "uniting the technical and imaginative elements as essentially as humanity does soul and body."

In the past century we have come a considerable distance in the technical fields of our respective professions. The architect is no

longer concerned solely with the esthetic side of any project. The architectural course of any grade A university requires a study of at least the basic engineering subjects. On the other hand, engineering students are also required to give thought and study to the various elements of design.

I have touched very briefly upon the history and the growth of our professions, not with any thought of pointing out that our professions are one and the same, nor with any thought that the achievements of one rival the achievements of the other but I have dug into past history for a very definite purpose. Our professions and the works of our professions are so closely allied that I believe the time has come when there should be "a single voice for our professions", and I might as well say right here and now that I feel that this single voice is vitally essential to advance the standing of our professions in the community—for the good of the community as well as of the professions.

The architects are now represented by national bodies, state bodies, county bodies and local bodies. Here in New York City, I understand, there are nine separate professional architectural organizations. The American Institute of Architects, during the past year, has carried on an intensive campaign of unification. I am not familiar with the details of this, but the purpose of this effort is

identical with the thought which I wish to leave with you tonight.

In the United States, I have been told, there are about 14,700 licensed architects; 5,000 of these are members of The American Institute of Architects, and there are approximately 2,000 other architects who are members of other separate professional organizations.

We have a similar situation, but apparently to a greater degree, in the engineering profession. A bulletin of the Associated State Engineering Societies indicates that there are more than ninety engineering societies in the United States and that they have a membership of approximately 200,000 engineers. The so-called founder societies are The American Institute of Electrical Engineers, with a membership of 22,600; The American Society of Civil Engineers, with a membership of 20,400; The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, with a membership of 18,600, and The American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, with a membership of 13,600. In addition, there is the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, with a membership of 4,900; and The Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education (whose members generally are also members of the larger engineering societies), which represents about 3,700 professors.

With over ninety separate organizations representing the engineering profession, and with a similar

number representing the architectural profession, I think you will agree with me that there is little chance for the more than quarter of a million of professional technical men being effectively heard. Do not misunderstand me—I believe there is a place for all of these separate organizations, but there must be some overall national body created which will be empowered and qualified to speak for the engineers and the architects of America. Speak just as the American Medical Association, with more than 120,000 members, speaks for the entire medical profession, and just as The American Bar Association, with its 32,000 members, speaks for the legal profession.

At the annual dinner of The American Institute of Consulting Engineers, just last month, Professor Harold E. Wessman, the retiring president, in his address entitled "A Unified Profession," expressed "the hope that the great engineering societies of America will again band themselves together in an overall organization through which they may exert one powerful voice on those matters of national interest in which all engineers have a common stake."

I join with Dr. Wessman in this appeal to my own profession, but I feel that this occasion has given me an opportunity to broaden the scope and invite the thinking of you architects along the lines which will produce a single voice for our professions.

The Editor's Asides

THREE ARE THOSE who find some pleasure in pointing out the fact that the fundamental differences between man and the other members of the animal kingdom are very few and very slight—and the occasions when man is at war with his fellow men lend some weight to their arguments. Nevertheless, there is one difference that is so obvious as to be very generally overlooked—man's heritage. The fact that man's achievements—unlike those of the wolf—are not co-terminous with his span of life—is the foundation fact of civilization. So generally do we take for granted the material world about us, that it rarely occurs to one of us to marvel at the heritage that men long since become dust have bequeathed us: the sum of recorded knowledge, law, invention, shelter—the inventory is endless. It is well for man's continued existence that this is so, for, whether it be cause or effect, the young of mankind is more helpless in his environment, and for a longer period, than the young of any other animal.

The point of this diversion is that mankind's abundant heritage, like the too-abundant heritage of an individual, tends to atrophy the creative impulse. We come into a world that is ready-made—a fairly comfortable and beneficent environment. There is for us—quite unlike our pioneer forebears—no

driving necessity for making our environment better, safer, more productive. That is, there is no physical compulsion facing us, but there certainly is an obligation, imposed by a continuing sense of duty to the race and to those who have lifted civilization to its present plane.

We hear, more and more insistently, the statement that we must rebuild our cities, and too frequently we quail before the staggering task. Why should we not rebuild them? Cities have been rebuilt before today. What is left of the original Fort Dearborn—Chicago? What remains of the pre-fire San Francisco? Yes, it will be said, but these are now vastly bigger, infinitely more stable, and their rebuilding now would entail enormous expense. Well, haven't we the means and the brains and the courage equal to the task? If this War had leveled New York or Washington to a pile of rubble, would we not rebuild them—and better them? Our cities are not destroyed, but most of them are mortally sick and wretchedly fitted to present-day needs. Have we or have we not the guts to build them anew? Let's leave convincing evidence to posterity that their forebears of the twentieth century were men qualified to add to mankind's heritage, not merely to live upon it.

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